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# U.S. House of Representatives

## COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH CONGRESS

335 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515

<http://veterans.house.gov>

March 10, 2014

The Honorable Eric Shinseki  
Secretary  
U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
810 Vermont Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Secretary Shinseki,

I write today to express my concerns regarding reports indicating a potential breakdown of negotiations between the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) on the replacement medical center in Aurora, Colorado. I was pleased that the VA initiated the discussion about bringing USACE into this vital major construction project. Additionally, I was pleased that USACE offered to implement their Design-Construction Evaluation (DCE) process, which has been successfully implemented by other agencies to help their projects find a path forward to completion.

However, recent reports that these discussions may be dissolving are concerning because an investigation by the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations has uncovered a litany of evidence showing a pattern of mismanagement in the three remaining major construction projects. In fact, a Government Accountability Office study concluded that there are serious questions about the ability of the VA Office of Construction and Facilities Management to effectively complete the projects. For this reason, I introduced H.R. 3593, the VA Construction Assistance Act, which seeks to bring USACE into the Aurora, New Orleans, and Orlando projects as an expert project manager.

The veterans who are waiting for these hospitals to be completed deserve for the VA to look at all options to improve the outlook of these projects. The Aurora facility may not be completed until 2016 or 2017 if the VA stays on its current track. For this reason, I would be more than dismayed if the reports indicating the VA has decided not to utilize USACE's expertise and implement their DCE process are true.

I demand an immediate response to the following question:

- Has the VA decided not to utilize the DCE offered by USACE for the replacement facility construction project in Aurora, CO? If so, please fully explain the reasoning this decision was made and what plan the VA has to advance its own construction management in order to improve the outlook of the replacement facility construction in Aurora, CO.

Please provide this information within the next 7 days. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Eric Hannel, Staff Director of the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, at (202) 225-3569.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mike Coffman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

**MIKE COFFMAN**

Chairman

Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations